

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 878

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY SANAA

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

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LIMDIS

NOFORN

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y T E X T

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORS, PINS, MASS, UK, JO, IR, MU, PK

SUBJECT: EXPATRIATE ADVISORY ROLES IN DEFENSE/SECURITY FIELD

REF: STATE 29563

SUMMARY. ADVISORY ROLE IN SULTANATE OF BRITISH IN ALL FIELDS
PREDESTINED TO DECLINE; HOWEVER, THIS PROCESS MAY BE SLOWER IN
DEFENSE/SECURITY FIELDS THAN IN SOME OTHER AREAS. EVAL-

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UATION OF PRESENT ROLE AND FUTURE PROSPECTS MUST TAKE INTO

CONSIDERATION BOTH QUANTITATIVE FACTOR AND FACT THAT BRITISH ADVISORS OCCUPY A NUMBER OF VERY KEY POSITIONS. ALSO GERMANE IS REALIZATION THAT "OMANIZATION" OF LEADERSHIP IN SECURITY/DEFENSE AREAS IS A VERY SLOW PROCESS INDEED. ASSUMPTION IS THAT REDUCTION IN ANY FUNCTIONS PERFORMED BY BRITISH ADMIT PERFORCE WOULD HAVE TO BE OFFSET BY CORRESPONDING INCREASE IN PARTICIPATION FROM SOME OTHER FOREIGN QUARTER; INDICATIONS ARE THAT OMAN GOV WOULD BE ONLY TOO HAPPY TO SEE USG ASSUME INCREASING ROLE. WHILE WE MAY BE LURED INTO THIS, EMBASSY BELIEVES ATTENTION SHOULD BE DEVOTED TO KEEPING OTHERS, ESPECIALLY BRITISH, ENGAGED AS LONG AND ACTIVELY AS POSSIBLE. END SUMMARY.

1. FOLLOWING IS INTERIM REPLY TO DEPARTMENT'S A-47. GIVEN PRESENT STATE OF FLUX (E.G. IMMINENT ARRIVAL OF JORDANIAN BATTALION, RECENT TDY TRAINING BY US TOW TEAM, ETC.), EMBASSY ANTICIPATES FURTHER REVIEW PRIOR TO APRIL 15 DEADLINE.

2. BRITISH ROLE: IN APPROXIMATE QUANTITATIVE TERMS, BRITISH DEFENSE/SECURITY PRESENCE IS REFLECTED ACCURATELY IN DEPT'S A-74. BOTH OMANGOV AND LOCAL BRITISH ESTABLISHMENT HEAVED ALMOST AUDIBLE SIGHS OF RELIEF WHEN U.K. ROLE SURVIVED RECENT DEFENSE REVIEW UNSCATHED. LIKEWISE, BOTH PARTIES WERE REASSURED BY REAFFIRMATION OF LABOR GOVERNMENT'S SUPPORT FOR PRESENT ARRANGEMENT AS ARTICULATED DURING RECENT VISIT BY DAVID ENNALS (MUSCAT 179). DESPITE THIS, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT A DIMINUTION OF BRITISH DOMINANCE IN ALL FIELDS IS INEVITABLE. THIS CAN BE INFERRED FROM AND ATTRIBUTED TO AN ACTIVE OMANGOV POLICY TO MOVE AWAY FROM LONDON (AND, CONCOMITANTLY, TOWARDS WASHINGTON), TO HMG CONSIDERATIONS, WHETHER INDUCED BY BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS OR POLITICAL EXPEDIENT, AND TO PROSPECTIVE EASING OF DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS AS DHOFAR WAR WINDS DOWN.

3. NOTWITHSTANDING ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS, PROCESS OF DECLINE IN BRITISH INFLUENCE MIGHT BE SLOWER IN DEFENSE/SECURITY FIELDS THAN IN OTHER AREAS. FIRST, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT SULTAN QABOOS WILLINGLY WOULD FOREGO MATERIEL AND MANPOWER ASSISTANCE TO SAF WHICH IS STILL VITAL TO CAMPAIGN AGAINST PFLO REBELS. IT IS JUST AS UNLIKELY THAT HE EASILY COULD REPLACE BRITISH SHOULD HMG MOVE TO CUT OFF OR SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE AID.

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FINALLY, RECENT DECISION TO PURCHASE RAPIER AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM AND JAGUAR AIRCRAFT IMPLIES CONTINUING BRITISH PRESENCE TO GET THOSE SYSTEMS GOING (AND, IN PROBABILITY, TO KEEP THEM OPERATING FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD). HENCE, WHILE A REDUCTION IN TOTAL NUMBERS OF BRITISH MILITARY/SECURITY PERSONNEL IS LIKELY IF PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN DHOFAR, THIS WOULD REPRESENT THE BRAWN MORE THAN THE BRAIN. ADVISORY ROLE WOULD BE LITTLE AFFECTED.

4. IRANIAN ROLE: IRANIAN FORCES ARE PRESENT IN STRENGTH (I.E. TWO BATTALIONS, NUMBERING APPROXIMATELY 2000 MEN). HOWEVER IMPORTANT THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO WAR EFFORT, IT CANNOT BE SAID THAT THEY PLAY ANY SIGNIFICANT ADVISORY ROLE. OMANGOV SEEMINGLY (AND CORRECTLY) BELIEVES THAT ANY ADVICE ON DEFENSE/ SECURITY MATTERS WHICH IRANIANS MIGHT OFFER WOULD BE SECOND-HAND, FILTERED INFORMATION; OMANIS WOULD BETTER BE SERVED BY GOING DIRECTLY TO SOURCE (I.E. US). THUS, WHILE WE FORESEE CONTINUING HIGH LEVEL COOPERATION WITH IRANIANS (EXPANDING TO INCLUDE PATROLS BY IIN IN OMANI WATERS AND USE OF IIAF UNITS IF F-5'S FINALLY ARRIVE), COORDINATION WILL STOP SHORT OF ANY SORT OF TUTORING. WE SHOULD USE OUR INFLUENCE TO INSURE GOOD EXCHANGE OF INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS, IF NECESSARY URGING THEM TO ESTABLISH FORMAL LIAISON PATTERNS.

5. JORDANIAN ASSISTANCE: AMMAN'S 1060 CONTAINS LATEST INFORMATION ON JORDANIAN SECURITY/DEFENSE ASSISTANCE TO OMAN. JORDANIAN ENGINEERING COMPANY AND POLICE ADVISERS HAVE ACQUITTED THEMSELVES WELL. AS OF NOW, EMBASSY BELIEVES THEY ARE BETTER REGARDED THAN IRANIANS IN TERMS OF MILITARY DISCIPLINE AND ABILITY. IMMINENT ARRIVAL OF BATTALION WILL BE FURTHER TEST OF THEIR METTLE UNLESS THIS UNIT IS USED STRICTLY IN UNDEMANDING ASSIGNMENTS SUCH AS GUARDING SALALAH-MIDWAY ROAD. SAME PHILOSOPHY APPLIES HERE AS IN CASE WITH IRAN RE RELIANCE ON SECOND-HAND (AND, BY IMPLICATION, SECOND BEST) TRAINING AND ADVICE. HOWEVER, IF USG HOLDS OMANIS AT ARMS LENGTH OR IS OTHERWISE UNABLE TO MEET QUANTITATIVE NEEDS FOR ADVISERS IN SECURITY/DEFENSE FIELDS, WE BELIEVE SULTAN WOULD TURN TO AMMAN IN PREFERENCE TO TEHRAN FOR SUCH HELP. MAINLY THIS WOULD REFLECT A HIGHER OPINION OF JORDANIAN CAPABILITIES; PARTLY IT WOULD BE POLITICAL SAGACIOUSNESS IN KEEPING FENCES MENDED WITH HIS ARAB BRETHREN.

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INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 EUR-08 PM-03

DODE-00 INR-05 CIAE-00 SP-02 PRS-01 SY-02 AF-04 /051 W

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AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBXISY JIDDA

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6. ROLE OF PAKISTANIS AND OTHERS: THERE ARE A LIMITED NUMBER OF PAKISTANI NAVAL OFFICERS ON LOAN TO SON. OUR INFORMATION IS THAT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN PARTICULARLY EFFECTIVE (AND ONE OF AREAS WHEREIN OMANIS SEEK US G ADVISORY ASSISTANCE IS PRECISELY TO IMPROVE NAVY). LIKEWISE, PAKISTAN LONG HAS PERMITTED RECRUITMENT OF BALUCHIS INTO SAF. THIS HOPEFULLY WILL CONTINUE, AS BALUCHIS HAVE PROVEN THEMSELVES TO BE GOOD AND BRAVE SOLDIERS. HOWEVER, THEY, LIKE IRANIANS, ARE REGARDED AS FIGHTERS RATHER THAN ADVISERS. FROM TIME TO TIME, UAE HAS DISPATCHED SMALL CONTINGENTS TO OPERATE IN QUASI-SECURITY ROLE IN NORTHERN OMAN. MOVEMENTS HAVE BEEN OBSCURE, AND WE KNOW SECRET

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LITTLE ABOUT FREQUENCY, SIZE OR EFFECTIVENESS. GOODLY PROPORTION OF UAE DEFENSE FORCE IS MADE UP OF OMANIS; HENCE, IT IS ALMOST SEMANTIC TO REGARD ASSISTANCE FROM THAT QUARTER AS BEING "EXPATRIATE". IT BEARS MENTION THAT OMANGOV DOES NOT FEEL IT HAS RECEIVED MAXIMUM COOPERATION FROM UAEG IN SECURITY-RELATED MATTERS. NOTEWORTHY WAS HANDLING OF OCTOBER 1974 TERRORIST PLOT WHICH WAS LAUNCHED FROM UAE. OUR INFORMATION IS THAT THERE WAS MINIMAL EXCHANGE OF INTELLIGENCE PRIOR TO SUCCESSFUL (IF FLUKY) DENOUEMENT, AND LITTLE IF ANY COOPERA-

TION FROM UAEG IN FOLLOW-UP OPERATIONS. FINALLY, OMANGOV IS SUSPICIOUS OF PRESENT UNDERCURRENT OF DIPLOMATIC INTRIGUE BETWEEN ABU DHABI AND ADEN. IN A NUTSHELL, IT MIGHT BE SAID THAT OMANIS, STUNG BY LACK OF COOPERATION AND HELP FROM ARAB BRETHREN, FEEL EQUAL -- IF NOT SUPERIOR -- TO ANY OF THEM IN SECURITY/DEFENSE MATTERS. IT IS UNLIKELY THEY WOULD TURN TO ANY ARAB STATE (WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF JORDAN) FOR ADVICE IN THESE MATTERS.

7. WHAT ABOUT THE USG? AS HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY APPARENT FOLLOWING SULTAN'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON, OMANIS ACTIVELY SEEK CLOSER RELATIONSHIPS WITH USG IN SECURITY/DEFENSE MATTERS (AS WELL AS IN OTHER FIELDS). BEFORE RECENT IPA DEMISE, PLANS HAD BEEN MADE TO SEND POLICE TO TRAIN THERE. AN MTT TEAM RECENTLY COMPLETED TRAINING CYCLE IN OMAN FOR OPERATION OF TOW; WE HAVE PENDING A REQUEST FOR FOLLOW-UP TRAINING IN U.S. A US MILITARY SURVEY TEAM IS BEING TALKED ABOUT FOR THIS SPRING. WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF OMANIS SEEK SOME PILOT TRAINING IN U.S. IN EFFECT, USG PROBABLY HAS POWER TO DETERMINE HOW FAR AND WIDE OUR ADVISORY/ASSISTANCE ROLE SHOULD TAKE US. THERE IS LITTLE QUESTION IN OUR MIND THAT OMANIS (AND SULTAN IN PARTICULAR) REGARD US TO BE LEADER IN THIS FIELD (AS WELL AS IN TECHNOLOGICAL MATTERS IN GENERAL). SOME PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS, TO BE EXPANDED IN COURSE OF POLICY REVIEW, ARE NOTED BELOW.

8. THE SPECIAL ADVISERS: IN ADDITION TO FOREGOING ANALYSIS OF COUNTRY-OF-ORIGIN FACTORS, NOTE SHOULD BE TAKEN OF FACT THAT QABOOS RELIES ON A FEW INDIVIDUALS FOR SPECIAL ADVICE IN SECURITY/DEFENSE MATTERS. INFLUENCE OF THESE COUNSELLORS STEMS FROM THEIR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH SULTAN RATHER THAN FROM THEIR PARTICULAR NATIONALITY. ACCORDINGLY, THEIR INPUT

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MUST BE CONSIDERED APART FROM GENERAL COMMENTS AND TRENDS NOTED ABOVE. FOREMOST AMONG ADVISERS ARE: LT. COL J.T.W. LANDON (CANADIAN), SULTAN'S EQUERRY; LT. COL. G. HARCOURT (BRITISH), OFFICER-IN-CHARGE OF ROYAL GUARD SQUADRON; COL. M.G. DENNISON (BRITISH), ADVISER ON SECURITY; AND YEHIA OMAR (LIBYAN), UBIQUITOUS "EXPEETER" WHO INTERPOSED

HIMSELF BOLDLY DURING SULTAN'S MILITARY TALKS IN WASHINGTON. SLIGHTLY REMOVED FROM SULTAN HIMSELF ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER EXPATRIATES, MAINLY BRITISH, IN DEFENSE/SECURITY ADVISORY AND COMMAND POSITIONS. THESE SEEM TO HAVE A GOOD PERSONAL HOLD ON THEIR POSITIONS AND, HENCE, SHOULD FIGURE IN THE PICTURE WELL INTO THE FUTURE. IF AND AS THEY MOVE ON, THEY MOST LIKELY WILL BE REPLACED BY OTHER EXPATRIATES WHO MORE OFTEN THAN NOT WILL BE CHOSEN THROUGH "OLD BOY" BRITISH NETWORK.

9. COMMENT: EMBASSY PREFERS TO DEFER FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS
RE USG ROLE FOR MORE CAREFUL ANALYSIS. SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT
USG INTERESTS ARE SERVED BY MAINTAINING A CONGENIAL, STABLE
REGIME IN OMAN. THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY IMPLY HIGH-LEVEL
DIRECT INVOLVEMENT, AND AT THIS TIME, EMBASSY BELIEVES USG
SHOULD PROCEED WITH CAUTION IN SELECTING THOSE AREAS AND
PROGRAMS IN WHICH WE WISH TO BE INVOLVED. ON BALANCE, SECURITY/
DEFENSE AREAS MAY NOT BE IN FOREFRONT RE OUR CONSTRUCTIVE
CONTRIBUTION.
ZWEIFEL

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